



Meeting Minutes

Downtown Strategy Stakeholder Work Group

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Amy Buckler
360.570.5847

Wednesday, December 2, 2015

6:30 PM

**Eastside Fire Station - 100 Eastside
NE**

ROLL CALL

Present: 13 - Committee member Clydia Cuykendall, Committee member Janae Huber, Committee member Meg Martin, Alternate Kim Murillo, Committee member Jessicarae Nunez, Committee member Karen Parkhurst, Committee member Connie Phegley, Committee member Karen Reagan, Committee member Mike Reid, Alternate Carole Richmond, Committee member Bob Wubbena, Alternate Vita Zvirzdys-Farler, and Committee member Missy Watts

Excused: 6 - Alternate Tessa Andrascik, Committee member Janice Arnold, Alternate Ruben Nunez, Committee member Dave Platt, Committee member Annette Roth, and Committee member Terry Wilson

1. WELCOME

City Staff Present:

Community Planning and Development Senior Planner Amy Buckler
Economic Development Director Renee Sunde

MAKERS Consultant Group Present:

John Owen, Kendra Dahlen

Ms. Dahlen welcomed group members and the public, and provided an overview of the objectives for the meeting. She distributed handouts entitled "Downtown Vision & Goals," "A Comprehensive Plan Overview," and new contact cards for the Downtown Strategy.

2. REVIEW MEETING OBJECTIVES

In preparation for this meeting, members reviewed images of the mapping exercise conducted at the November 21, 2015 workshop and last stakeholder work group meeting. Staff & consultants led a discussion with the group about:

- What were observations?
- What went well; didn't go so well?
- What were some lessons learned that can be applied to future workshops?
- What feedback has been heard from other community members? What general advice can be provided?

Based on participation and/or review of the mapping exercise:

- What are common themes or differences?
- What potential alternatives arise for downtown?
- What was learned at your table?

Mr. Owen and Ms. Buckler gave an overview of next steps in the process and asked members to think about any hot topics the group should be prepared to address.

3. AGENDA ITEMS

[15-1181](#) Agenda Item Attachments

Feedback about the November 21, 2015 workshop:

- Because the issues are many and complex, coverage time seemed inadequate.
- Discussion was too fast paced and the quality of information analysis was compromised due to time constraints.
- Approval of round table groups which were experienced as effective.
- The graphics were helpful and important to visual context of issues.
- Good energy and sense of purpose.
- Childcare provision although underutilized, was a real benefit and should be continued.
- Quality of facilitation enabled some groups to stay on track and go deeper.
- The dot exercise was a good beginning and supported interaction.
- Confusion in the small groups about whether groups needed to be in agreement.
- Pressure to think and speak quickly is especially difficult for anyone not fully knowledgeable about the issues.
- Frustrating for the public when their points of view are not represented.
- Economic landscape presentation went too fast, needed to be explored in greater detail, and was difficult to follow.

Need to think about:

- How to allow for unequal levels of issue education/awareness of participants.
- Develop alternative ways of public engagement when structure pressures folks to speak and think "on their feet".
- Neighborhood centers questions on OLYspeaks is a good survey example.
- Let the public know online responses have equal value to those made in person at meetings.

Mr. Owen explained how the preliminary work of the group will eventually lead to alternatives and outlined preliminary results from the last workshop mapping exercise. He encouraged members to continuously think about alternatives and opportunities for concentrating energy and efforts.

Discussion:

- Increase tourism revenue and establish pedestrian-only thoroughfares.
- Benefits of restoring the estuary.

Demographic themed ideas:

- Family friendly is an important theme - removing traffic threats - have attractions - connections to the neighborhoods - public recreation - capital campus integration into the community - Carnegie library to become children's library - how transportation fits into discussion - light rail coming within next 25 years is unrealistic.

Economic development themed ideas:

- high tech - tourism - in town farms - food product production - art - music - sharing economy - no longer a brick and mortar economy - question about whether or not mixed use retail is a shrinking market - water recreation - educational institutional resources downtown (TESC or SPSCC?) - better linkage with the state agencies - basic needs retail venues - community pool - bowling alley - specialty retail - restaurants/eating and drinking/breweries - scientific hub - wastewater treatment education - shoreline management industry/actions to take to reinforce - maintain affordable business space - supporting local economy - neighborhood centers - light manufacturing - educational institutional resources downtown/possible partnership with TESC.

Discussion:

- Objections to downtown due to perceptions of blight creating a barrier.
- When building owners sit on properties waiting to sell in a higher priced market, tenant choices are not optimal for the community.

Mr. Owen discussed how alternatives will evolve through the blending of ideas and after technical and feasibility analysis.

Ms. Dahlen discussed how design guidelines can influence perceptions of safety.

The work session was completed.

4. MEETING WRAP UP

Ms. Buckler discussed the viewshed dot exercise from November 21, 2015 and explained there is more work to be done before viewsheds for analysis are determined. She requested bios from the members for inclusion to the website and announced the next meeting on January 6, 2015.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 8:28 p.m.